EPISODE 1 · THE SOLE DECIDER

Leadership Gate 1 · Dependency

> **Reference to Series 1: WP 1 · Organizational Sentience** — the six properties of *organizational sentience* and the criterion for the leap from maturity stage 4 to 5: mission continuity. The evidence, with references, is there. This episode converts it to the leader.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Series 2 is a demanding path. That is neither advertising nor a warning, but information.

This episode asks of you one week of observation with pen and paper, then about twenty minutes of writing, and in six weeks a second look at the same number. Without that week the episode delivers nothing — you can read it, but Gate 1 will not open.

Anyone who wants to examine the research behind it without walking the path is better served by Series 1: there it stands citable, with references, without imposition. **Anyone who wants to walk the path is welcome.** At the end of the eight gates there is no certificate. There is an organization that stays capable of judgement when you are not in the room — and that is verifiable.

One note that belongs here: the prompts in this series work with real decisions and real names. For personnel data and third-party names, the anonymized version is what goes into an AI system — roles instead of names. It costs two minutes.

ABSTRACT

This episode breaks the maturity finding of WP 1 down to a single number: how many decisions in your area do not happen without you. The route there is one week of observation that changes nothing, followed by a document setting out three decision frames. Gate 1 opens when decisions that would not have been taken without you are taken without you six weeks later.

Suggested citation: Huesch, G. (2026). The Sole Decider. Series 2 · The Superintelligent Leader, Episode 1. Working Paper Series 2026, Global Leadership Consultancy.

THE GATE

The lock	The organization needs him — and until the last moment that looks like competence
The key	A dependency list: 20 decisions, four classes, three decision frames
It opens when	Decisions from class D stand in C or B six weeks later

PART 1 · THE FINDING

WHERE IT COMES FROM

WP 1 · Organizational Sentience, Series 1. There, six properties are developed that make *organizational sentience* — the capacity of an organization to register its own state and act on it — testable at all. One of them separates maturity stage 4 from stage 5, and it is the subject of this episode: **mission continuity.** The question there reads: does the organization retain its capacity for judgement when a central leader leaves?

Everything stated here is evidenced and traceable in WP 1. This episode does not cite afresh; it converts — from the organization to the person who is that central leader within it.

THE PILOT WHO NEEDS NO CHART

A harbour pilot knows every shallow in his approach. For thirty years he brings ships in, in every weather, without once looking anything up — he has it in his head. The harbour works excellently. The shipowners praise him. He simply has no chart.

Nobody notices while he is healthy. It is noticed on the day he is not, and then it is noticed catastrophically. The knowledge was always there. It never took a form in which somebody else could use it.

The decisive point of this image is not that the pilot did anything wrong. He delivered thirty years of good work. The point is that **his competence and the harbour's incompleteness are the same phenomenon.** The better he holds it in his head, the less reason there ever was to draw a chart.

WP 1 puts this as a test question, not a virtue. A commitment that holds as long as its author is in the building is not a commitment. It is a habit with an advocate. And an organization that draws its judgements from one head has no judgement — it has access to one.

FORTY ITEMS AND THE WRONG FIRST THOUGHT

A division head returns from two weeks' holiday. Forty items are waiting on the desk, and in the first three hours he works through them, fast, assured, with the good feeling of being needed. His first thought is pride: *it doesn't work without me.*

The second thought would have been the right one. Forty items that waited two weeks are forty measurement points for the maturity of this organization. Every single one could have answered

the question of why it waited: was information missing, an authority, a habit, or merely the nerve to decide it oneself?

Nobody counted them. By Friday the pile is gone, and with it the measurement.

That is why this episode begins with a week of observation and not with a measure. The number exists in every operation. It is simply never written down, because working through feels better than counting.

A remark that belongs to honesty. Not every decision waiting on the leader is a systemic fault. Some things are his job and his alone: a personnel decision one level down, a commitment made externally, a departure from a rule he set himself. The observation week does not distinguish this, and the prompt does so explicitly — classes C and D are handled separately, because "would have turned out differently" and "would not have been taken" are two different things.

WHAT THE LEADER RECOGNIZES HERE

1 · His indispensability is a metric, not a quality. The more decisions that stall without him, the lower the maturity of the organization — not the higher his worth. This is the most uncomfortable sentence in the entire series, and it stands deliberately in Gate 1 and not in Gate 8. Whoever does not accept it here has the remaining seven gates ahead of them with no reason to pass through.

2 · Leadership 1.0 has no fault, only a limit. Personality, charisma and instinct are not a weakness. They are what carried most careers, and they work. They simply do not scale: they stop exactly where one human being stops being able to see everything. The transition is not announced by something getting worse, but by more arriving.

3 · The failure shows up late. A sole decider notices nothing while he is there. He notices on holiday, in illness, at handover — that is, when it can no longer be repaired. That is why the observation week is a check-up and not a fault hunt. It finds something before it hurts.

PART 2 · THE WORK

THE OBSERVATION TASK

One week, one sheet. Change nothing.

Note every time somebody asks you before acting — in the doorway, in passing, by message, in a meeting, on the phone. Three entries per line:

WHO	ABOUT WHAT	COULD THEY HAVE DECIDED IT THEMSELVES?

Fill the third column immediately, from the gut, without deliberation. Your first impulse is more accurate than your justification.

What you do not do this week: delegate more often, make yourself deliberately less available, answer queries differently than usual, or tell anyone you are counting. The week should look normal. Otherwise you are measuring your intentions and not your operation.

On Friday: count the third column. Write the number with the date on the same sheet. That number is your baseline, and you will need it again in six weeks.

Two common stumbling blocks. First: most leaders underestimate the volume by more than half, because short queries do not register as decisions in memory. Note the ten-second cases too. Second: whoever places the week in a holiday or crisis week measures an exception. Take an ordinary week.

THE IMPLEMENTATION TASK

Monday, one thing. Not three.

Take from your list the three questions where the third column reads "could have decided it themselves" — and write down the decision frame for those three cases. Three sentences per case:

1. What the person decides themselves.
2. From what threshold they ask — a number, an amount, a missed deadline, something verifiable. Not "when in doubt".
3. Whom they inform afterwards.

Send it to exactly those three people. **Not to everyone, not as a policy, not as the announcement of a new understanding of leadership.** Three emails, each to one person, stating what that person decides for themselves from now on.

The reason for this narrowness is in Gate 2, and you will find it again there: one thing that takes effect in three places becomes a habit. An announcement to everyone becomes the fifth initiative.

THE PROMPTS

Prompt 1.1 · The dependency test

This prompt does not need your observation week — it works on decisions already taken. You can run it today and observe the week in parallel.

``` Below I give you the last 20 decisions taken in my area of responsibility. For each one you have: what it was about, who decided, and how long it took from submission to decision.

Assign each decision to exactly one of four classes: A — could have been taken the same way without me B — could have been taken without me, but more slowly C — would have turned out differently without me D — would not have been taken without me

Then output: 1. A table: decision | class | one-sentence justification 2. The count per class 3. For every decision in C and D: exactly which information or which authority rested with me and with nobody else

Invent nothing. Where a detail is missing, write "detail missing" and do not assign a class. No recommendations, no assessment of my leadership — only the assignment.

The decisions: [insert here] ```

**Prompt 1.2 · The absence plan**

Runs on the output of 1.1.

``` Below is the result of my dependency test: the decisions in classes C and D, each with the information or authority that rested with me alone.

Assume I am unreachable for four weeks — not partially, not at all.

For each point: - What would have to be documented, decided or transferred for this decision to be taken without me? - With whom would it have to rest (role, not name)? - What part of that is feasible within a week, what needs months?

Format: table with the columns point | missing | role | effort (week/month). Sort by effort, the feasible first. Do not invent roles I have not named. ```

**What these prompts do, and what they do not.** They give no advice. They lay twenty decisions side by side and classify them — work a human cannot perform on his own material, because he can justify every single one and the pattern disappears in the process. The machine sees the pattern because it does not know the justifications.

A prompt that delivers a result without your material does not belong in this series.

# PART 3 · ABOUT GERALD HUESCH

**Anyone claiming that indispensability is a metric must say where the measure comes from.**

**Systems shape behaviour.** Through the selection of the right instruments, mechanics and leadership codes — derived from values and leadership guidelines — the behaviour of everyone involved is synchronized and aligned. Not through motivation, but through a system that produces the right behaviour when applied.

Sales has Salesforce. Finance has SAP. Leadership has LEAD21.

**About the author.** Gerald Huesch is the creator of the leadership operating system category – "one of the most professional and creative minds in the domain of leadership and difficult change projects" (Boston Business School). With LEAD21 he built the first operating system for leadership – 21 evidence-based methods, the comprehensive solution and the missing link for complete transformation, extreme growth and high-volume post-merger integration: a unique leadership system for human coordination at scale, in which alignment and culture emerge as a by-product. He has trained more than 30,000 executives in over 30 countries (NASA, Rolls-Royce, Airbus, Omnicom and others) and delivers executive leadership training, leadership development and executive mentoring for executives in Germany, the Americas, Asia Pacific and the UAE. Participants from 300+ companies report +87% clarity, +58% efficiency, +50% performance, +46% alignment and −50% negative stress after LEAD21 (participant-reported); a one-year study with 567 leaders (Prof. Beate Hanson & Prof. Mohit Bhandari, McMaster University) showed improvement in 8 of 9 climate dimensions. Dr. Charles Pellerin (NASA) on LEAD21: "Unique in the world, and a capability that nobody else has." **gerald-huesch.com/about-en**

# PART 4 · THE GATE AND THE PATH

## THE CHECKPOINT — GATE 1 OPENS WHEN

Not: "I have delegated." Not: "I have come to realize that ..."

**But: how many decisions from class D stand in C or B six weeks later?** Number before the exercise, number after, both dated on the same sheet.

One movement is enough. Whoever moved one of seven D decisions is through the gate, because he has proved it is movable.

**And if nothing moved?** Then the gate is closed, and that is a finding, not a failure. Six weeks without movement mean the dependency does not sit in habits but in structure — in missing authorities, missing documentation, missing roles. That is more valuable information than a quick success, and it is exactly the material Gate 5 needs. Note it and move on.

## STATUS OF THE GATES

| GATE | TITLE | YOUR KEY | STATUS |
|---|---|---|---|
| **▶ 1** | **The Sole Decider** | **Dependency list, 3 decision frames** | **you are here** |
| 2 | The Toolbox | Inventory of the last three years | to follow |
| 3 | Why Good Methods Evaporate | Fallback path, one mandatory question | to follow |
| 4 | The Bottleneck Is Not Information | Checking budget, extension, abstention | to follow |
| 5 | What an Operating System Must Do | Assessment of the four functions | to follow |
| 6 | LEAD21 — and What Is Still Missing | Gap map, requirements specification | to follow |
| 7 | The Sentient Organization | Codebook, three target bands | to follow |
| 8 | The Superintelligent Leader | Constitution list, succession test | to follow |

The order binds, because each gate needs the key of the previous one. The gap map in Gate 6 arises from the documents of Gates 2, 4 and 5. Whoever skips them gets a generality back from the AI.

## WHAT COMES NEXT

**Gate 2 · The Toolbox.** Your dependency list shows where decisions stall. Gate 2 asks what you have used so far to try to solve that — and begins with an inventory that in most operations is the first of its kind. The surprise of Gate 2 is not the finding. It is the length of the list.

The lock there: he does not know his own inventory of tools.

## OPEN QUESTIONS FROM THIS EPISODE

- The four classes A to D are a classification, not a measurement. Two people can classify the same decision differently, and the prompt knows only your account. The number serves comparison with itself over time, not comparison between areas.
- How much dependency is legitimate in a role is not decided by this episode. Gate 8 returns to it, there with the distinction between a role and a fault in the organization.
- Whether a moved decision stays moved does not show within six weeks. Gate 3 treats exactly that.

## REFERENCES

**Series 1, Working Paper Series 2026** WP 1 · Organizational Sentience. The six properties and their failure patterns; the criterion for the transition from maturity stage 4 to 5.

The primary sources used in WP 1 from the 19th Conference on Artificial General Intelligence (AGI-26), San Francisco, 27–30 July 2026, are identified there with volume and page numbers. This episode introduces no new references.